Miao AE5
AKha AO4

/57 cont./

M 854 [482] Abadie (1), while discussing the carrying of burdens on the back,

1. Page 160.

also mentions the child-carriers of the Meau: "This method of carrying loads is also used for small children, whom the women hoist on their backs, packed in a kind of bag that is held on the shoulders by means of two supports." Abadie published illustrations of this on Plates 39 and 40 of his work. There are no cradles.

A M 855 Among the Akha small children are cared for by the parents, among the Meau chiefly by the grandparents. Older siblings also devote much time to them and are often entrusted with the care of somewhat bigger children. From six to eight years of age they are taken into the children's group (see the section, "The Children's Group," in this chapter).

A M [868] [867] In both tribes much time is devoted to the children. The mother attempts to teach her child a few words at an early age; she begins with the expression for father and mother. Thus, from a young age the child has continual social contact all day long. Accordingly the social components are more strongly developed than among European children of the same age. The

M 114 855 situation is therefore nothing like what Lajonquière (2) writes

2. II, p. 315.

about the children of the Meau: /58/ "They grow up without supervision and moral education, a prey to their instincts, and are forced into hard work in the fields as soon as their age permits them to do work."

A M 857 [609] [867] [157] [123] The children learn very early to distinguish between family and tribal members and persons who are foreign to the tribe. They are not bashful, but are very curious, and because of these qualities become very annoying to strangers after a brief acquaintanceship. On the other hand, they do not like to be watched while they go about their own business. Thus it came about that everywhere and in no time we were the focal point of the children, who crowded around us in droves and

/79 cont./

A M 868 The small child is first taught how to speak, beginning with the words for father and mother. Later comes the simple housework, and only then the aforementioned more difficult spheres of work. For the latter the parents on the one hand select those children who exhibit special talents for the one or the other sphere; on the other hand, the educators and parents naturally seek to train the children in those crafts which they themselves as teachers and models have mastered extraordinarily well. One Meau father, for instance, who was an excellent hunter, said to me: "I would have liked to make a hunter out of my oldest boy, but he is only interested in my smithy.

A M 867 869 Besides these things which are required to master the material aspects of life, the educators and parents also instruct the children in religion and medicine, since this is not the business of the shaman, as well as manners and good behavior, which is very important in view of the traditional politeness of the Meau! In short, education includes everything that will enable the child to master life later on and to become a respected member of the community. For the rest, all the wishes of the children are complied with as far as possible. To be sure, among the Meau they are not trained to dance, but they are not prevented from dancing.

M [868]

A M 861 From earliest childhood punishment and reward are used as a means of education. Disobedient children are reprimanded, and if this does not help, they get a beating, along with references to their duties, up to the age of eight, as parents explained to me. Actually I never saw adults actually beat a child. As a reward, on the other hand, a father may carve a small crossbow for his eight-year-old son, or, among the Meau, ask the blacksmith to make a small gun for his well-behaved son.

A M 593 858 The children are brought up remarkably well. They obey promptly, and one rarely sees it happen that a child has to be punished. The children are treated equitably, but there are always special favorites. As a rule, it is the ailing or weak upon whom /80/ the affection of the parents is obviously bestowed, or upon the youngest, who naturally are also the weakest. The older children do not mind this, and siblings are generally not jealous at all as soon as they have